

The Second Honeymoon

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THIS STARTS THE STORY
Jimmy Chatterer, club man, dependent on an erratic elder brother, engages himself to a beautiful actress, Cynthia Farrow. She fills him with despair and he rushes to his boyhood sweetheart, Christine Wyatt, for sympathy. Christine, Jimmy's friend, is introduced to Cynthia and her mother and accompanies them to the theatre and afterward to a fashionable cafe. He wonders why Jimmy is not more interested in Christine, who so eagerly delights in his company and the surroundings, for this is her first visit to a cafe of this character.

He supposed you come here often," she said. She looked up into Jimmy's bored young face. "I suppose not as often as you would like to be."

He smiled.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES
"Well, I'm afraid it isn't; you see—"

He broke off; he sat staring across the room with a sudden flash in his eyes.

A man and woman had just entered. The woman was in evening dress, with a beautiful sable coat. Her hand was resting on the man's arm. She was looking up at him with smiling eyes.

Jimmy caught his breath hard in his throat. For a moment the rays of light from the chandelier seemed to be shining on Cynthia Farrow, and the man at her side was Jimmy's brother, the man who had been sitting with his back to the door by which Cynthia and her escort had entered the room.

Cynthia was looking at Jimmy Chatterer's face, he turned in his chair quickly. Cynthia was looking at him with a smile. A waiter had taken her sable coat; without it she looked too showy; it was cut too low in the neck. A diamond necklace glittered on her white throat.

Sangster turned back again. Under cover of the table he gave Jimmy a look. He saw that Christine had noticed the sudden change in his face. To hide his friend's discomfort he rushed into speech. He tried to distract the girl's attention; presently Jimmy recovered himself.

Mrs. Wyatt alone had not been conscious of any disturbing element. She had lived all her life in the country, and her few visits to London had been in a brief, and always conducted on the most severe of lines—a quick, highly respectable hotel stay in which she had never seen a single newspaper had raised a dissentient voice, and perhaps a visit to a museum or picture gallery.

It had only been under protest that she had consented to visit the suburban theatre at which Cynthia Farrow was playing.

Under the guidance of Jimmy Chatterer, London had suddenly been presented to her in an entirely fresh light. She was thoroughly enjoying the play, and she was looking at Christine with rather wistful eyes.

Christine was so wrapped up in Jimmy Chatterer and Jimmy's—of course, he must know many, many other women far more attractive and beautiful than this little daughter of hers. She half sighed as she caught the expression of Christine's eyes as they rested on him.

Suddenly Jimmy rose. "Will you excuse me a moment?" "There is a faint noise over there."

Sangster scowled. He thought Jimmy was behaving like a weak fool. He would have stopped him had it been at all possible; but Jimmy had already left the table and crossed to where Cynthia was sitting.

The sight of her in Mortlake's company for the second time that day seemed to her the most revolting of sights. There was a raging fire of jealousy in his heart as he went up to her.

A waiter was filling her glass with champagne. Mortlake was whispering to her confidentially across the corner of the table.

"Good evening," said Jimmy Chatterer.

He did his best to control his voice, but in spite of himself a little thrill of rage vibrated through it.

Mortlake raised himself and snarled.

"Evening," he said shortly.

Cynthia extended her hand; she was rather pleased than otherwise to see him. She liked having two strings to her bow; it gave her worldly heart an odd little pang as she met the fierceness of Jimmy's eyes.

"Are you having supper here, Jimmy?" I didn't see you."

It was not the truth. She had seen him the moment she entered, but she thought it more effective to pretend otherwise.

"I am over here with friends," said Jimmy curtly. He glanced across to the table he had just left, and met Christine's eyes.

Somehow he felt uncomfortable. He looked sharply away again and saw that the beautiful smiling face raised to his.

"When may I come to see you?" he asked bluntly.

He spoke quite distinctly; Mortlake must have heard every word.

Cynthia looked nonplussed for a moment; then she laughed.

"Come any time you like, my dear boy."

"I am always pleased to see you—any afternoon, you know."

She smiled and nodded. Jimmy felt that he had been dismissed. After a moment he walked away.

His heart was a dead weight in his breast. He sat down again beside Christine. She turned to him eagerly.

"Want that Miss Farrow?" "Oh, Jimmy, why didn't you tell me?"

Jimmy drained his wineglass before answering.

"I forgot you were interested; I'm sorry."

"She isn't alone, you see, or—or I would introduce her if you cared for me to that."

"I don't think Miss Wyatt would care for Miss Farrow," said Arthur Sangster, quietly.

Jimmy looked furious. Angry words rushed to his lips, but he choked them with an effort.

"Narrow-minded old owl!" he said, half jokingly, half in earnest.

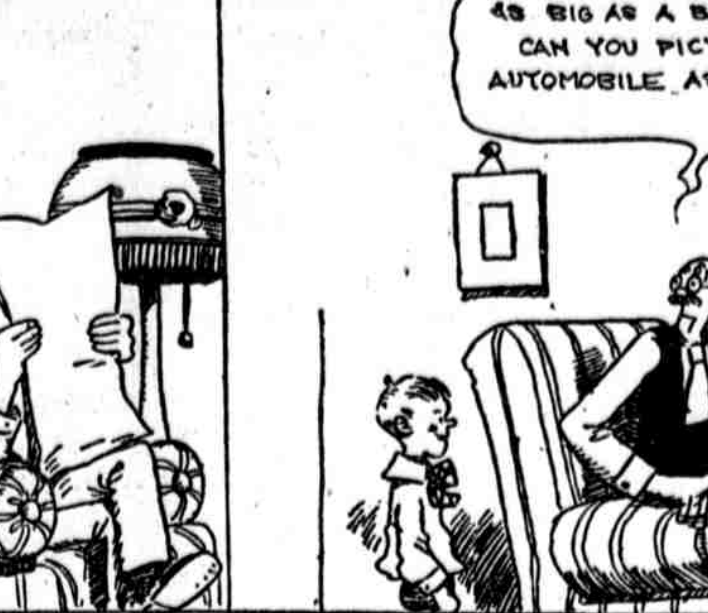
Later when the two men had left Mrs. Wyatt and Christine at their hotel and were walking away together, Jimmy burst out savagely:

"What the devil do you mean about Christine not liking Cynthia?" "It's a gross piece of impertinence to say such a thing."

"It's the truth, all the same," said Sangster imperturbably. "The two girls are as different as chalk from cheese. Miss Wyatt would soon dislike Cynthia—they live in different worlds."

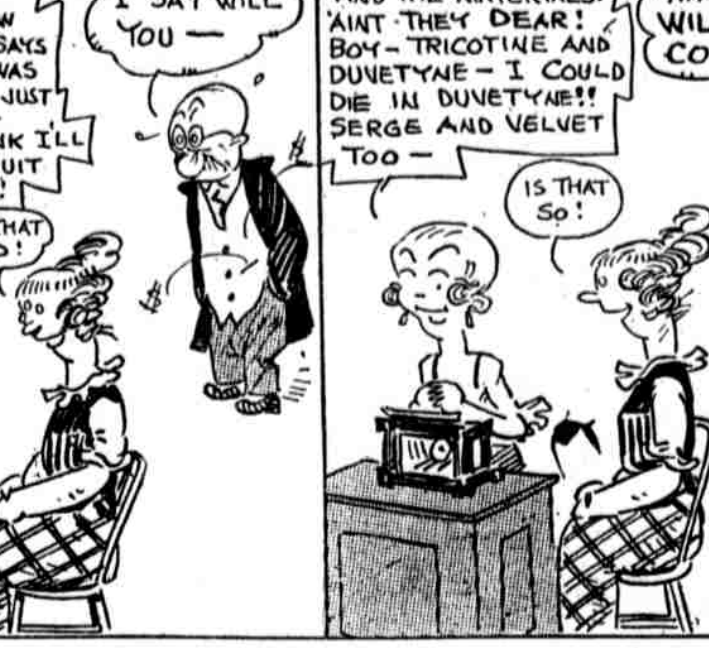
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